

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 EUR-12 ISO-00 AID-05 OMB-01 TRSE-00

PC-01 EA-10 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11

/103 W

-----069639 032359Z /15

R 021740Z AUG 78

FM AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0120

INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY DAKAR

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY RABAT

C O N F I D E N T I A L NOUAKCHOTT 2207

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, MR

SUBJECT: NEW MOROCCAN AMBASSADOR TO MAURITANIA

REF: RABAT 4509

1. MOROCCO'S NEW AMBASSADOR TO MAURITANIA, AHMED SNOUSSI, WHO PRESENTED HIS CREDENTIALS LAST WEEK, CALLED ON ME JULY 31. HE IS AN IMPRESSIVE, DARK-SKINNED, SIX-FOOTER WHO IS OUTGOING AND INFORMAL.

2. HE DESCRIBED HIS INITIAL IMPRESSIONS OF THE NEW GIRM LEADERS AS BEING POSITIVE, IN GENERAL, BUT HE LAMENTED THEIR LACK OF EXPERIENCE IN WORLD AFFAIRS. WITH THREE NOTABLE EXCEPTIONS, THEY SEEMED TO HIM TO BE GENUINELY ANXIOUS TO MAINTAIN THE ALLIANCE WITH MOROCCO. THE EXCEPTIONS HE NAMED ARE MINISTER OF PLANS AND MINES LT COLONEL MOCTAR OULD ZAMEL', MINISTER OF FINANCE AND COMMERCE SID'AHMED OULD B'NEIJARA AND MINISTER OF INTERIOR MAJOR JIDDOU OULD SALECK.

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THE THREE HAVE TO BE WATCHED CAREFULLY, HE SAID, BECAUSE OF THEIR IMPATIENCE TO END THE WAR AT ANY COAST AND BECAUSE OF THE NEGATIVE INFLUENCE THEIR PROGRESSIVE AND QUOTE PERHAPS EVEN PRO POLISARIO ENDQUOTE IDEAS COULD HAVE ON OTHERS. FYI: SEE FINAL PARAGRAPH BELOW FOR EMBASSY COMMENT. END FYI.

3. DURING THE CONFLICT INSELF HE SAID THERE WERE SIGNS

THAT BOUMEDIENE WAS MAKING A GENUINE EFFORT TO USE THE OPPORTUNITY OCCASIONED BY MAURITANIA'S COUP TO COME TO SOME TERMS. SNOUSSI SAID THAT MOROCCO SHARES MAURITANIA'S INTEREST IN SEEKING PEACE, BUT NOT PEACE AT ANY PRICE. HE ADDED QUOTE WE ARE NOT INTERESTED IN MOVING BACKWARDS ENDQUOTE. HE SUGGESTED THAT A HASTY SETTLEMENT THAT WAS REACHED FOR THE SAKE OF SETTLEMENT COULD CREATE MORE PROBLEMS THAN IT SOLVED. REGARDING BI-LATERAL TALKS WITH MAURITANIANS, HE STATED THAT ALTHOUGH THERE HAVE BEEN SEVERAL EXCHANGES OF EMISSARIES BETWEEN RABAT AND NOUAKCHOTT, THE MAURITANIANS HAVE NOT YET EVEN HINTED AT WHAT THEY HAVE IN MIND WHEN THEY SAY THEY WANT TO END THE WAR, LET ALONE OFFERED PRECISE SOLUTIONS.

4. REGARDING MEDIATION, HE THOUGHT THAT THE OAU AD HOC COMMITTEE OF FIVE COULD BE USEFUL BECAUSE OF THE PRESSURE IT COULD BRING TO BEAR ON THE PARTIES CONCERNED TO BEGIN SERIOUS NEGOTIATIONS. HE SUGGESTED THAT THERE MIGHT BE A MEANINGFUL ROLE FOR SAUDI ARABIA TO PLAY.

5. ON THE SUBJECT OF ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE, HE SAID THAT THE MAURITANIANS CANNOT HONESTLY BLAME THEIR CURRENT STRAITENED FINANCIAL CONDITION ON THE WAR; THAT THE SAUDIS WERE PICKING UP THE ENTIRE TAB. HE ADDED HOWEVER THAT ALTHOUGH THEY HAD AGREED TO DO SO, THE SAUDI'S HAVE NOT YET RELEASED CREDITS THAT WERE ORIGINALLY PROMISED TO OULD DADDAAH REGIME. HE SHRUGGED CONFIDENTIAL

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OFF A REPORT THAT LIBYA HAD PROMISED LARGE AMOUNT OF ASSISTANCE WITH QUOTE WHO CAN PUT ANY FAITH IN A LIBYAN PROMISE UNQUOTE. HE EXPRESSED INTEREST IN OUR AID AND PEACE CORPS ACTIVITY HERE, AND SEEMED IMPRESSED BY THE MAGNITUDE OF OUR DROUGHT RELIEF EFFORTS, BUT SUGGESTED THAT GOM AND USG ECONOMIC AID HAS BEEN MISDIRECTED TO THE POLITICAL ADVANTAGE OF CHINESE. WHILE PRC HAS BUILT NECESSARY AND PRESTIGIOUS WATER SUPPLY SYSTEM AND ELECTRIC POWER PLANT IN NOUAKCHOTT, AND IS STARTING ON DEEP WATER PORT AND SPORTS STADIUM, MOROCCO SPENT FOUR MILLION DOLLARS TO BUILD A MOSQUE IN CITY FULL OF THEM, QUOTE MERELY TO SATISFY AN OULD DADDAAH WHIM END QUOTE. HE IS HAPPIER ABOUT MOROCCO'S ROLE IN RECENT IMPROVEMENTS TO NOUAKCHOTT AIRPORT AND HOSPITAL CONSTRUCTION AT ATAR.

6. SNOUSSI PROMISED THAT HE WOULD BE IN TOUCH SOON AND OFTEN WHEN HE HAD A CLEARER PICTURE OF THE SITUATION HERE.

7. COMMENT: SNOUSSI'S OUTSPOKEN OBSERVATIONS REGARDING THE THREE MINISTERS ARE CONSISTENT WITH REPORTS FROM OTHER SOURCES THAT (A) THE THREE ARE MORE LIBERAL IN POLITICAL ORIENTATION THAN OTHER LEADERS, (B) ALL THREE, AND ESPECIALLY

JIDDOU OULD SALECK, WIELD MORE INFLUENCE THAN THEIR PORT-FOLIOS WOULD SUGGEST (C) JIDDOU AND OULD ZAMEL ARE AMBITIOUS AND INTELLIGENT; PROFESSIONAL SOLDIERS; B'NIEJARA ALTHOUGH A TECH-NOCRAT (PROFESSIONAL BANKER) CAN BE ASSERTIVE.

HE IS REPORTED TO HAVE LOCKED HORNS WITH FORMER PRESIDENT OULD DADDAH OVER FISCAL POLICY AND MANAGEMENT OF THE CENTRAL BANK, (D) JIDDOU MAY HAVE BEEN THE REAL INSTIGATOR OF THE COUP BUT DID NOT YET HAVE SUFFICIENT STATURE AMONG HIS CO-CONSPIRATORS TO DEMAND THE TOP JOB. ALL THREE SEEM TO BE ADMIRERS OF COLONEL QADHAFI AND MIGHT WELL BE ENCOURAGING LIBYAN EFFORTS TO MEDIATE.
SEPTEL PROVIDES BIO DATA ON THE THREE END COMMENT. KRYZA

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